

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached sheet of drawings includes changes to FIG. 10(C). This sheet, which includes FIGS. 10(A)-(D), replaces the original sheet including FIGS. 10(A)-(D).

Attachment: One Replacement Sheet

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

I. Status of the Claims

Claim 2 was previously canceled.

Claims 3, 4, 8 and 15-17 are canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

Claim 7 allegedly remains withdrawn from further consideration.

Claims 1, 5-7 and 9-14 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

Claim 18 is added without the introduction of new matter.

Claims 1, 5-7 and 9-14 are pending.

II. Status of the Drawings

The drawings were objected to because the numeral 62 was underlined in FIG. 10(C). In response, FIG. 10(C) is amended to overcome that objection. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection to the drawings on that basis.

It is noted, in the Advisory Action dated September 29, 2006, the Examiner stated that the Applicants' previous Response to the Final Office Action dated July 11, 2006 has overcome the above objection to the drawings.

III. Restriction Requirement

The Examiner states that claim 7 remains withdrawn because "it is unclear whether such reads on the elected species or not." In response, claim 7 is amended to clarify subject matter

According to MPEP §608.01(d), there is no specific page limit for the Summary of the Invention. Further, the Summary of the Invention as currently written is approximately 15 1/2 pages long. The Detailed Description of the Invention as currently written is approximately 31 pages long, which is twice as long as the Summary of the Invention. Applicants respectfully submit that the Summary of the Invention as currently written is a properly written brief summary of the Detailed Description of the Invention, in accordance with MPEP §608.01.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objection to the disclosure.

V. Objections to the Claims

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-14, and 17 were objected to because of various informalities. The objections to claims 3, 8, and 17 are moot because claims 3, 8, and 17 are canceled by the present response. Claims 1, 5, 6, and 9-14 are amended to address the objections. Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the objections to claims 1, 5, 6, and 9-14.

VI. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, First Paragraph

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-14, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph. The rejection of claims 3, 8, and 17 are moot because claims 3, 8, and 17 are canceled by the present response. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 9-14.

Specifically, the Examiner states that the last two lines of claim 1, as previously presented, are “not clear what structure is being claimed and thereby, whether the application as originally filed provides support therefor.”

In response, claim 1 is amended to clarify subject matter recited in the last two lines of previously presented claim 1 as follows:

wherein the elongated convex area has a hollow part with a substantially triangular shape in a lateral cross section, and two ends in the longitudinal direction, at least one of the two ends forming a finger insertion opening through which a finger is insertable into the hollow part, and

wherein the main sheet body and the sub-sheet body each have longitudinal side edges at opposite ends in the lateral direction, each of the longitudinal side edges of the main sheet body being bonded to each of the longitudinal side edges of the sub-sheet body, respectively, at each of the opposite ends.

Support is found, for example, in the clean copy of the substitute Specification at page 22, line 15 to page 23, line 11, and page 23, line 19 to page 24, line 11, and FIGS. 1 and 4.

Specifically, as shown in FIGS. 1 and 4, the elongated convex area 3 has a hollow part 5 with a substantially triangular shape in the lateral cross section I-I, and two ends in the longitudinal direction. At least one of the two ends forms a finger insertion opening 19A. A finger is insertable through the finger insertion opening 19A into the hollow part 5. Further, the main sheet body 2 and the sub-sheet body 6 each have longitudinal side edges (i.e., portions of the peripheral edges 15 and 65, respectively) at opposite ends in the lateral direction. Each of the longitudinal side edges of the main sheet body 2 is bonded to each of the longitudinal side edges of the sub-sheet body 6, respectively, at each of the opposite ends.

Therefore, amended claim 1 is clear as to the structure being claimed, and supported by the originally filed Specification, drawings and claims. Independent claim 14 is amended similarly to amended claim 1 to the extent discussed above. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the

withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1 and 14, and claims 5, 6, and 9-13 dependent from claim 1, under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph.

VII. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112, Second Paragraph

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-14, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as indefinite. The rejection of claims 3, 8, and 17 are moot because claims 3, 8, and 17 are canceled by the present response. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 9-14.

Specifically, the Examiner rejects claim 1 because the last two lines of claim 1 as previously presented are unclear as to what is claimed. Similarly to the discussion above on the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, amended claim 1 is now clear as to what is claimed. Independent claim 14 is amended similarly to amended claim 1.

Further, the Examiner rejects claims 5 and 6 because of a lack of a proper antecedent basis. In response, claims 5 and 6 are amended to address the rejection on that basis.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 5, 6, and 9-14 under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph.

VIII. Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102/103

Claims 1, 3, 5, 6, 8-13, and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) as anticipated by Lichstein et al. (International Application Publication No. 2000/40197, herein "Lichstein"). Further, claim 14 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Lichstein in view of Gann et al. (International Application Publication No. 1999/55270, herein "Gann").

opening shown in, for example, FIGS. 17e and 17f, is not large enough to insert a finger into the hollow part. Even if a wearer forces and inserts her finger into the hollow part through the opening shown in, for example, FIGS. 17e and 17f, the finger would not be able to be removed from the hollow part while placing the interlabial pad at a position where the leakage of menstrual blood is effectively prevented. Thus, in Lichstein, the insertion of a finger into the opening of the elongated convex area defeats the purpose of the invention of Lichstein.

Additionally, in this regard, Lichstein merely describes, for example, that “[s]uch excess height is also useful as an aid for the user to grasp to insert and remove absorbent article 20” (*see*, Lichstein, page 6, lines 29 and 30), and that “[o]ptional finger-grasping member 103 is also shown” (*see*, Lichstein, page 9, lines 1 and 2, and FIG. 15).

Moreover, amended claim 1 is further distinguishable over Lichstein because amended claim 1 includes the additional features as follows.

- a main sheet body comprising:
 - a water permeable surface sheet facing a body side; and
 - a water permeable backing sheet facing an opposite side of the body side, the surface sheet and the backing sheet being bonded to each other enclosing a first absorber for absorbing body fluid; and
- a sub-sheet body comprising:
 - a water permeable surface sheet facing the body side; and
 - either a water permeable or non-permeable backing sheet facing a garment side, the surface sheet and the backing sheet being bonded to each other enclosing a second absorber for absorbing body fluid[.]

Referring to, for example, the substitute Specification at page 22, line 19 to page 23, line 11, and FIG. 4, the main sheet body 2 has the water permeable surface sheet 11 facing a body side, and the water permeable backing sheet 12 facing the opposite side of the body side. The surface sheet

11 and the backing sheet 12 are bonded to each other enclosing the first absorber 13 for absorbing body fluid. Further, the sub-sheet body 6 has the water permeable surface sheet 61 facing the body side, and either the water permeable or non-permeable backing sheet 62 facing a garment side. The surface sheet 61 and the backing sheet 62 are bonded to each other enclosing the second absorber 63 for absorbing body fluid.

Lichstein fails to disclose the above-noted features recited in amended claim 1. In this regard, for example, as described at page 9, line 33 to page 10, line 19, and shown in FIGS. 17e and 17f, Lichstein merely describes that the web structure 210 includes the absorbent web 200 having the optional fluid permeable cover material 201, that the liquid impermeable structure 310 includes the liquid impermeable material 300, and that the web structure 210 and the liquid impermeable structure 310, co-extensively aligned, and attached. At page 10, lines 24 and 25, Lichstein merely describes that the absorbent web in FIGS. 17a-17f "can be a single layer or multiple layers comprising suitable absorbent material as disclosed in the forthcoming sections of the specification."

Accordingly, Lichstein fails to disclose the above-noted features recited in amended claim 1 as to how the sheet bodies, sheets and absorbers are structured in the interlabial pad. In this regard, Lichstein further fails to teach or suggest the above-noted features recited in amended claim 1 in a manner which would convince one skilled in the art to conclude that the interlabial pad is assembled as claimed by Applicants.

Therefore, amended claim 1 and claims dependent therefrom are further distinguishable over Lichstein.

insertion opening formed between the sub-sheet body and the mini sheet piece to adjust the height of the interlabial pad, so that the wearer can provide the interlabial pad suitable for her own labia depth. *See*, the substitute Specification, page 10, line 4 to page 12, line 12.

In this regard, none of the cited references teach or suggest the features of the finger insertion opening recited in claim 18. Therefore, claim 18 is allowable.

